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THE CHANGING FACES OF OUR LAND

**USDA Centennial
Photography Exhibit**

Centennial Committee
U.S. Department of Agriculture

MEET THE AMERICAN FARMER. Meet other people of agriculture, such as scientists, makers of agricultural supplies, and processors of food and fiber. Meet all the people who have wrought such prodigious change in the faces of our land during the last 100 years—more changes in the last generation than in all the time before.



Mathew Brady, c. 1862

1862 to 1870:—We were predominantly agricultural. Manpower was the essential input in farm production.

1871 to 1914:—We were in transition from a predominantly agricultural to an industrial economy, moving from muscle power to machine power. Our consciousness was awakening to the need for conservation of renewable resources. We were learning that wood, water, wildlife, forage, and recreation mean many things to many people, that topsoil and civilization go hand in hand.

1915 to 1929:—The First World War stimulated production incentives. Machines increasingly replaced man. A migration from farm to city was in full swing.



Martin Marrison, Minnesota Historical Society



John McKinney, 1954, Progressive Farmer



Jack Goodson, 1960, Progressive Farmer

Hermann Postlethwaite, 1961, USDA



Lloyd Richardson, 1961, USDA



Lloyd Richardson, 1961, USDA



Lloyd Richardson, 1961, USDA

1930 to 1941:—The Great Depression taught that the fortunes of both country and city people are inextricably bound together. New patterns in human relations, in light and power, appeared on the land. 1942 to 1962:—Substitution of machines and economic capital for manpower reached still higher levels. Our food supplies became a lifeline to millions overseas in a Second World War and during the recovery period afterward. The world's largest exporter of agricultural products, the U.S.A. sells 70 percent to countries willing and able to pay and sends 30 percent abroad as a "food for peace" investment to help provide energy for the newly-emerging peoples seeking to build strong, free nations.

Consider this picture of plenty and productivity: One person in agriculture today supplies 26 other people—nearly four times as many as 50 years ago. . . . One hour's work in a nonfarming occupation will buy a third more chuck roast, a third more potatoes, or more than twice as many eggs as it would have just 10 years ago. . . . It takes only two-thirds as many Americans as were on the land

a generation ago to produce over 50 percent more farm products. . . . Four out of 10 jobs in private employment off the farm are related to agriculture. . . . Agriculture has become the biggest single industry in the United States.

Reflect on our abundance. Production and marketing research, information and service mean that nearly everyone can get almost any food, anywhere in the nation, any time of year. Behind the scenes are farmers and scientists working continuously to control insects, diseases, and weeds . . . to make crop varieties more responsive to fertilizer and better adapted to soil, water, and climatic conditions . . . to breed better livestock . . . and to assure the consumer plentiful supplies of wholesome and nutritious food.

From Beltsville to Sumatra, agricultural scientists explore the world for the secrets of nature . . . or find a universe in a test tube. Wherever it has been found, whatever has been found that is good for agriculture has been immediately communicated to the farmer, who has transmitted the benefits to all consumers of food and fiber.

Agricultural specialists constantly reduce the time it takes information to get from the laboratory to the farm.

Any farmer or consumer can tap the Department of Agriculture's store of knowledge for the price of a postage stamp.

After research and education, the big task is to reach decisions through participation and discussion by both the farming and nonfarming public.

The problems of agriculture are probably the least understood of any in our economic life.

But remember, wherever people produce food and natural fiber and wherever people consume or use them . . . wherever farm people trade . . . wherever people process, manufacture, transport, store, or sell farm products . . . wherever people manufacture farm supplies, equipment, and machinery—this is agriculture—from the remotest farm or ranch to the heart of the greatest city.

Lincoln said, "The Agriculture Department is precisely the people's Department, in which they feel more directly concerned than in any other."

This exhibit of over 300 photographs was selected from more than 600,000 pictures taken by or in the custody of government agencies, state historical societies, commercial publications, and outstanding individual photographers. It has been designed as a large-scale portrayal in sweeping terms of rural life and growth over the last hundred years. While the exhibit is not intended as a pictorial history of either agriculture or the Department of Agriculture, its continuity has been developed as progress and productivity evolved through the years until an unprecedented scientific, technological, and social revolution burst upon the land.



Growth Through Agricultural Progress

May 1962



